DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 841 CS 204 996

AUTHOR Raburn, Josephine
TITLE Editor and Student Views on the Censorship Game.
PUB DATE Apr 79
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of the Association for Educational Communication and Technology (New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; *Censorship; College Freshmen; *Freedom of Speech; Higher Education; *Mass Media; Newspapers; *Reading Materials; *Reading Material Selection; *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Editors

ABSTRACT

Out of 200 newspaper editors randomly selected from a directory, 64 responded to a questionnaire eliciting their opinions on the subject materials most often censored by groups in the United States. The editors' responses were compared to those of 121 freshmen at Cameron University (Oklahoma). A majority of the editors supported the First Amendment, but many gave personal opinions showing they were not happy with some elements that appear in today's communications media. When compared with the conservative college freshmen, the editors had fewer censors among themselves than did the students, with a high percentage of both groups showing unwillingness to ban materials. The top three subjects of concern to both groups were violence, racial prejudice, and pornography. (A copy of the questionnaire is attached.) (Author/RL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED173841

EDITOR AND STUDENT VIEWS ON THE CENSORSHIP GAME

By

Josephine Raburn

Approximately 6000 words

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Josephine Raburn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

C S 996

EDITOR AND STUDENT VIEWS ON THE CENSORSHIP GAME

One of the recurrent problems of school media center personnel has been to exercise freedom of choice of materials to present to students without evoking some kind of censorship proceedings. Exposed to such emotion-fraught subjects as sex, obscenity, religion, and politics, certain persons or organizations could be counted on to pass resolutions and inaugurate active campaigns to censor what they felt was dangerous to the young.

Some groups have sought to weed racist material out of libraries even when it appeared in classics such as Huckleberry Finn. Educators have attempted to do away with folktales because of the violence in them; and women have rewritten them because of their sexism. Movies have come under attack because of explicit portrayal of sex, excessive depiction of violence, and use of obscene language or cursing. Books containing curse words have had repeated troubles around the country.

Communism, the bogie man of the fifties, would seem to be less feared today, but instances of repression of publications about it still appear. An article about Educational Research Analysts of Texas notes that Communism is one of the subjects attacked by Norma and Mel Gabler in their textbook reviews.[1] The Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom has reported an AFL-CIO policy of keeping visas from being issued to Communist union members in order to prevent their attending meetings in the United States.[2]

In the past, media center personnel had always thought they could depend upon the support of newspaper editors against censorship. The American Library Association in its publication, What To Do When the Censor Comes--and After, councils confronted librarians to "Seek the support of the local press when appropriate. The freedom to read and freedom of the press go hand in hand." From the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Bias and Censorship in the Elementary School, in the publication, Censorship: Don't Let it Become an Issue in Your Schools, comes this statement, "Remember: the press, more than any other single element in your community, is concerned with the preservation of First Amendment rights. In time of trouble, the press can be your strongest ally...."

It was decided that an investigation was in order to see just how newspaper editors really did feel about the subject. Among the questions that the research would seek to answer were these:

1. Is the attitude of editors toward censorship merely a job-oriented one arising out of the needs of the newspaper, or does it apply to everyone?

2. Do editors have a different viewpoint when they act as individuals and parents than they do on the job?

3. Is there a difference between what mature, older people consider threatening enough to be censored, and those that young people fear?

4. Do both older and younger people want to restrict material for children?

5. Has the media had an influence in changing attitudes toward censorship?

6. What do the people of our society fear most today? Is it different from what they feared most in the past?

A questionnaire was formulated as an instrument to elicit answers to these questions. It consisted of a combination of statements and questions, all of which could be answered Yes or No, except Number 16, which asked for a rating of 10 subjects by how dangerous they were felt to be to young people. In addition, the questionnaire provided space to explain each answer if desired.

The subject matter of the questionnaire was three older controversial subjects: religion, sex, and politics; and some newer ones: racism, sexism, and violence. The completed questionnaire was tested on upper classmen at Cameron University of Oklahoma who were English or Education majors.

Two groups made up the population sample for study, (1) editors of newspapers and (2) freshmen students in the first course of English Composition at Cameron University. Both groups would be high school graduates or beyond. They would contrast in age and experience.

Two hundred editors were chosen from N. W. Ayer and Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1978, by a table of random numbers. First, the page number was selected at random. Since every page has two columns, a coin was flipped to determine which column would be used. Another series of random numbers selected an editor from that column. Since magazine editors were interspersed with newspaper editors, if the number landed on a magazine editor, the next newspaper editor following was chosen. Every state was represented in the sampling, and the proportion of weeklies to dailies was close to the true proportion of weeklies to dailies currently being published in the United States. Sixty-four editors out of the two hundred responded.

This was well over the fifty necessary to give a significant result.

Since the student body of Cameron University is known to be a conservative group, it seemed appropriate to compare the editors to Cameron freshmen. Almost all of these freshmen are religious, and many belong to fundamentalist sects.

All freshmen have to take a first course in English composition. It was thought that freshmen taking the course at any one time would be a random sampling of all freshmen if the classes to be tested were chosen randomly. The faculty member whose name came first in the alphabet, the one whose name came last, and one in the middle who taught honors sections were chosen to give the questionnaire to all of their freshmen students in the first course of English Composition. Approximately thirty-six per cent (35.7%) of Cameron University's freshmen were enrolled in this course at the time of the survey. One hundred twenty-one, or 6% of the total class of 2,151 freshmen answered the questionnaire.

Questions 1 and 2 were about curse words. "Are you upset by curse words in books and films?" Sixty-nine per cent of the editors and 73% of the students said that they were not. On Question 2, however, "Do curse words bother you in books for children 12 years old or younger?", 89% of the editors and 96% of the freshmen said <u>Yes</u>. This answer agrees with the findings of Carolyn Peterson in a 1976 dissertation at Temple University in

which she noted that language ranked third in censorship affecting secondary school English teachers between 1968 and 1974.[3]

When asked "Why are you or are you not bothered by curse words?", 58% of the editors did not answer. Seventeen per cent said that such words were out of place for small children. Other comments were, "I curse myself," "They are not necessary," "They encourage uncouth behavior," "They erode our beautiful language."

The largest response (29%) from students was, "Society uses them so much that I'm used to them." The next largest response (16%) was that such words kept children from learning better words. Fourteen per cent had no comment. Other answers and their percentage of occurrence were, (6%) "They may be needed in a story for realism," (5%) "I see no sense in using them," (3%) "Curse words are made bad by people," (3%) "I am a Christian and taking God's (or Christ's) name in vain upsets me."

Question 3 asked, "If a book or film deals with atheism, do you think that it should be banned?" Ninety-four per cent of the editors and 73% of the students said No. A Chi-square test on this question showed a significant difference of opinion between editors and students at the 5% level with one degree of freedom. The formula $\chi^2 = (O-E)^2/E$ was used and was found to equal 9.53. A chi-square test was done to compare all of the results where it was possible to use it, but figures will not be given from now on in this paper.

What was the difference between answers of students and editors? Forty-eight per cent of the editors gave the reason for their answer as,"Freedom of speech," or "I oppose book banning." Twenty-eight per cent of the editors gave no reason at all. Twenty-eight per cent said, "Freedom of religion."

Forty-one per cent of the students said that atheism is a religion, and that everyone has the right to freedom of religion. Thirteen per cent did not comment. Ten per cent said that everyone's views should be represented. One person said that atheism should be banned because it is racist, though no explanation was given as to why the student thought that atheism and racism were connected. The rest of the freshmen who wanted to ban atheism, almost 24% of them, said things like, "Because there is a God." "It challenges the Christian belief." "It is blasphemy." More freshmen than editors were willing to deny freedom of religion to those who did not believe in a supreme being.

Even though close to one-fourth of the freshmen would ban materials on atheism, two of them gave answers which saw banning a book or film on religion as the same as an attack on a person.

The three questions dealing with cursing and atheism were interesting in that there seemed to be no difference between the opinions of male and female editors on them. Freshmen women seemed to be more bothered by curse words (30.4%) than freshmen men (11.6%), and to be more willing to ban materials on atheism (30%) than freshmen men (14%). All of them, editors and freshmen,

male and female, agreed that they were disturbed by curse words in materials for children. A whopping 64% of male editors, 100% of female editors, 93% of male freshmen, and 97% of female freshmen supported protection of children from cursing.

Six questions, Numbers 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, dealt with the various presentations of sex that frequently spur a censor into action. Three of them related to sex as shown in materials for young people. Question 4 was, "A book or film which is sexually explicit--even if moral--should be kept from certain people such as the young." This was a somewhat awkward sentence, but it was hoped that the responder would think of other groups besides children--the emotionally unbalanced and those of limited intelligence--that should be protected from sexually explicit material. This hope was not fulfilled. Over half of both groups, 56% of the editors and 66% of the students said Yes; and their comments showed that they were refering only to children. It was also obvious that many of them saw the books and films referred to as a form of sex education for children. Twenty per cent of the editors said that young people might not be intellectually or emotionally prepared to understand such material. Nineteen per cent of the students said that sexually explicit material should not be shown to the young under any circumstances. A minority in both groups said that such materials encouraged sexual experimentation. Another small number thought that children had plenty of time to learn such things and should be protected from them as long as possible. "They should not be overexposed too soon." "They do not understand the seriousness of sex and

might get the wrong idea," or "be frightened," or "might learn to abuse it."

Those in favor of allowing explicit sex in materials for children made statements like these: "We need to quit hiding things from the young," "Children should learn about sex at a young age." "Ignorance does not make healthy adults."

Most of the respondents said that they formulated their opinions at about the time they reached adulthood or had their first children.

Since Question 4 and Question 10 seemed the same to some of the respondents, it is important to compare the two. Number 10 was, "Sex education of children 12 years old or under is undesirable." Seventy-seven per cent of the editors and 86% of the students said no, it was not undesirable. A chi-square test on this question showed a significant difference between the two groups at the 5% level for 1 degree of freedom. Reasons for the answers indicated that 33% of the students thought that sex education was vital to all ages, and that "ignorance was not bliss." None of the statements made by editors showed much agreement at all as to why sex education was not undesirable.

Perhaps the freshmen, being younger, are closer to the effects of their ignorance than are the editors, and feel the pain of it more sharply.

Although many saw explicit sex in books and films as a form of sex education, it was most assuredly not the form of sex education they would choose as appropriate for children. Both groups

rejected it, while accepting the theory that sex education was desirable. Their answers showed that they felt Question 10 to be referring to scientific, non-titillating instruction. A majority of the answers seemed to indicate a feeling that parents should be responsible for sex instruction, and that it should begin very early.

Question 11 was, "Pictures showing sexual intercourse are out of place in books or films." Fifty-four per cent of the editors said that they were not out of place. Exactly fifty-four per cent of the freshmen thought that such pictures were out of place in books and films. The answers to this question showed editors and freshmen on opposite sides of the fence, and a chi-square test confirmed the difference.

A look at why the respondents thought as they did showed 33% of the editors and 21% of the students making no comment. Editors who answered did not agree on reasons. Eleven per cent said that pictures of sexual intercourse were all right in sex-education books. Five per cent made the statement that such pictures did not belong in novels or other materials used for intertainment, but were acceptable in books of non-fiction. Another 5% said that, since sexual intercourse was part of life, one could never go wrong in depicting it anywhere.

Nine percent of the editors and 21% of the students said that sexual intercourse was a private matter between two people, and was not suitable for public display. Nine per cent of the students would allow such pictures for sex education, but not in pornography. Students further said (8% of them) that pictures

like that were not for children at all. Another 4% said that they were "filthy," "offensive," "obscene" or "taboo." Three per cent saw sexual relations between a man and a woman to be, "A sacred act which should not be exploited." No explanation of how pictures of the act were exploitive was given, but they may have been thinking of profits from the sale of salacious materials.

Question 12, "Erotic classics such as The Arabian Nights or The Kama Sutra should be in libraries." was affirmed by 88% of the editors and 64% of the freshmen. The most common reasons given were that they are good literature, or art, or out heritage. One-fifth of the students admitted that they did not know how to answer the question because they were unfamiliar with the titles. Only two editors (3%) said that. Some of the other answers were that censorship is harmful or unjust, that libraries should have all types of books, and that someone just might want to read them. A few in both groups cautioned against making them available to children.

Question 13, "Adolescent novels should be on safe subjects and should not include things like homosexuality, pre-marital pregnancy, drugs, and divorce," was not agreed upon by either editors and students. A fairly high percentage of both groups (8% of the editors and 9% of the freshmen) did not answer the question at all. One-third of the freshmen as contrasted to 17% of the editors thought that adolescent novels should not include

the things mentioned. Nineteen per cent of the students and 30% of the editors did not give a reason why they answered as they did. It was plain that most of them who did answer saw the adolescent novel as a vehicle to teach morality. They said such things as: "Adolescents badly need reliable information on these subjects," "Children won't learn about the real world if we hide everything," "Older adolescents should be able to read honestly written, morally and psychologically sound writing," "If explanations clearly show the reader what is right and wrong, such subjects might be included." "These are facts of life and should be dealt with honestly."

If society as a whole expects no more of the adolescent novel than that it shape the thinking of young people into proper ideas about what is right and wrong, there is not much hope for it as a literary creation. Some of the students who thought that adolescent novels should be safe, gave the following answers:

> They encounter such things soon enough.
> They are too young to understand.
> If they are exposed to these it may give them ideas.
> Why depress them?
> Homosexuality should not be a subject.
> These things should not be in novels, but in reference materials.

It is clear that these students do not consider themselves adolescents, even though many of them are 17, 18 or 19 years of age.

Question 9 dealt with obscenities. L. B. Woods in a 1977 dissertation from the University of Texas found that 15.7% of all censorship attempts in educational institutions between 1966 and

1975 were because of obscenity.[4] This study shows that in most people's minds, obscenities and curse words are the same. The statement, "Four-letter words (obscenities) should be eliminated from books or films," was disagreed with by 72% of the editors and 60% of the freshmen. Eight per cent of the editors and 5% of the students did not answer the question.

There was a significant difference between editors and students. Although the editors were more tolerant than students in a mathematical and statistical tabulation, reasons given for opinions revealed greater tolerance in the students and less in the editors than the figures show. While editors disagreed, probably because of their commitment to freedom of the press, they often added that these words were used too often, or that they did not personally like them. A reason for their answer frequently given by freshmen was that obscenities have a meaning not provided by other words, and that they are part of life. Thirty-four per cent of the students gave this justification as opposed to 17% of the editors. Seventeen per cent of the students, but only 5% of the editors thought that a writer could get the same meaning without using them.

To the query, "What makes you feel this way?," students mentioned society, family, religion and common sense. One credited John Steinbeck with helping him formulate an opinion. Editors said that experiences in the real world and education formed their opinions on this question.

Freshmen were more conservative than editors about sex. The olf fear that exposure to sexual materials will cause a breakdown

in morals is still around, but is held by a very small minority of these groups. Only one person, a student, voiced the belief that pictures of sexual intercourse cause rape. One study done by the Commission of Obscenity and Pornography showed 49% of all adults believed that.[5] It seems reasonable to assume that, if the 49% figure were true, more than 0.5% of the editors and students would have mentioned it as a danger.

A comparison was made between the opinions of males and females on the questions pertaining to sex. Editors, freshmen, and upper division students were all included, a total of two hundred and twenty-five people.

Women as a whole were much more restrictive than men on pictures of sexual intercourse in books and films. They were not wanted by 69% of the females, while 60% of the males would permit them. Women were also more desirous of keeping sexually explicit material away from children, and they wanted to eliminate obscenities more than did men. See Table 1.

Table 1

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Question 4, Keep sexually explicit material from young.	58=r	42	74=r	26
Question 9, Eliminate obscenities from books or films.	21=r	49	38=r	62
Question 11, Pictures of sexual intercourse out of place.	40=r	60	69=4	31
Question 12, Permit erotic classics in libraries.	86	14=r	85	15=r

(Numbers are percentages.) (r shows the restrictive answer.)

Women may be more restrictive because of their more sheltered upbringing in American Soxiety. The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography showed women less liberal than men in this area, but provided evidence that people of both sexes become more liberal after exposure to sexual materials.[6] Women are usually not as free to examine such materials as are men. That is, they are discouraged from doing so by society.

The first political question was Number 8, "Communism should be shown as a desirable economic system in books and films." It provoked an explosive, emotional response from a number of the respondents, "This is not a communist country." "It is not a desirable economic system." "You shouldn t be so opinionated." "The question shows bias."

Seventy per cent of the editors and 77% of the freshmen said that it should not be presented as desirable, while only 9% of the editors and 14% of the students said that it should be. If this is any indication of how the average American feels, the country is in no danger of its people embracing communism. However, the question probably does not fairly answer what it was supposed to answer, "Would you ban books and other materials which show communism as a desirable economic system?" Some editors understood it that way, and while rejecting the actual statement, they added, "I would not urge banning." A second portion of this question asked, "How long have you had this opinion?" The answers from students: "Since I gook a political science course," "Since

I found out about communism," "Since I returned from a trip to communist countries," "Since Nixon," "All my life," "Since elementary school."

Editors mainly said that it should be shown as it is, not as a desirable system or an undesirable one. Most had held this opinion for many years, "since the age of reason." One editor from Georgia wrote, "Since four o'clock this afternoon."

The second political question was Number 14, "Textbooks which show mistakes made by the United States in dealings with foreign nations should be allowed in American elementary schools." Editors (83%) and students (77%) both agreed with that one. Only 7% of the editors and 17% of the students said that such material should not be in elementary texts.

The respondant was not asked to give a reason for his answer, but some volunteered one. "They don't need to know," "They should wait until they are older to start worrying about foreign affiars," "They should learn to love their nation and not hate it," were freshmen comments. Editors said, "Truth is the most important teaching," "There is nothing that is all good," and "History is just a scholar's opinion."

Editors seemed slightly more liberal than freshmen politically, but a chi-square test showed no significant difference between the groups on either question.

The questions on women's liberation were Numbers 6 and 7. Number 6 stated, "Books or films which show women subject to men

or inferior to men should be banned?" Seventy-eight per cent of the editors and 69% of the freshmen rejected this, and 14% of the editors and 23% of the students agreed. A chi-square test showed no significant difference in the two groups at the 5% level at one degree of freedom.

Although neither group wanted to ban the, a higher percentage of women wanted to than did men. Twenty-nine per cent of the freshmen women and 31% of the female editors said Yes, but only 11% of the male editors and 19% of the male freshmen did. It is not surprising that women felt more strongly about this subject than men did.

Many of the comments said that women should be presented in all ways that exist. One editor said that some women prefer the inferior role. One male student said that women were inferior. One female editor said that she would love to ban those books, but then how could she defend freedom of the press?

On Question 7, "Women should be shown as housewives or mothers and nothing else in books and films," there was unusual unanimity. Not an editor or a freshman approved. One upper classman wrote Yes, but he had misread the question. He explanation of his answer was that it was a bad stereotype. A recent survey of textbooks in schools showed that no progress had been made in improving the image of women portrayed in them.[7] If the present study reflects in any way American public opinion in general, textbook publishers should act swiftly to show women as they really are in American society. Reasons for answers to Question 7 were worded in different

ways, but most of them showed that women were considered more than just housewives and mothers, and that to portray them in such a limited way was inaccurate.

Everyone had a different answer to, "Can you say what made you have your opinions on women?", but the answers usually fell into two broad categories, "interaction with women," or "being a woman." One female editor gave this poignant answer, "My grandmother who got a B. A. at 65 and myself trying to make it alone at 29."

Wome gave credit to feminists, some to marriage. A few of the freshmen said that their fathers' treatment of their mothers had made them feel as they do. In the latter cases, the students went on to criticize this treatment as being unfair to the mother.

Racism was the subject of Question 5, "Books or films which show Indians, blacks or orientals in a derogatory way should be banned." Thirty-nine per cent of the freshmen said Yes as compared to 18% of the editors. Six per cent of the editors did not answer the question, but only 4% of the freshmen left it blank. At first, it would seem that students felt more strongly on this subject than did editors, but a closer look at answers to Question 16 showed that editors placed racial prejudice as the number one danger to the young. The low percentage advocating banning material which presents racial groups in a derogatory way was probably due to the devotion of editors to the concept of freedom of the press, as 14% of the editors indicated. It was the comment showing the most agreement among them. Student comments indicated that their

own race or experience had formed their opinion (7%), or that "people are all alike," (10%).

In both groups large numbers said that one could not change the facts of history, and that literature will, of course, reflect what has existed in the past. Other comments were:

> I deplore racism. (Student)
> Whites are often shown in a derogatory way. (Editor)
> Some people are derogatory. (Editor)
> There is no sound reason to have WASPS always in the role of villians. (Editor)
> It causes prejudice. (Student)

Most could not give a reason for their beliefs, but some said their upbringing, or their parents, or their education had helped formulate them. Ten per cent of the students attributed them to books, films, television and the Bible. This question was the only one which caused a fairly large group to credit media with influence on an individual's thinking.

Question 15 was "Violence on television, in the movies or in folktales (such as Little Red Riding Hood) is permissible." There was agreement between students and editors on this one. Seventy-five per cent of the editors and 63% of the students said that such violence was permissible. Eleven per cent of the editors and 12% of the students were not sure, and did not answer the question.

Twenty-two per cent of the students and 31% of the editors who answered the question did not know why they felt as they did. Eleven per cent of the students and 20% of the editors said that

violence is a part of life. Many of the editors added that violence is overdone on television. Twelve per cent of the students worried about children seeing too much of it.

One editor said that violence must be eliminated in society first, before eliminating it in the media. Another said that violence in the media causes violence in society. Several of the students thought that violence was humorous and made a story more entertaining.

A second part of this question asked the people who said that violence was not permissible in media if they would permit it in one medium and not in another. Twenty-six per cent of the students giving a negative answer said that they would not because violence is violence, and they did not want it anywhere. The 74% who would permit it in some medium answered, "In folktales," "In movies," "In books but not movies." "Not on television because of its influence."

Fifty-four per cent of the editors giving a negative answer said, "No, it would be unfair to allow it in one medium but not another," or "I abhor all violence." The 46% who would allow violence in some medium said that violence in books or the movies was not as serious as it was on television.

Students and editors did not agree. The editors were pretty evenly split on Yes and No answers, but most students thought that violence was less dangerous in certain communication vehicles than it was in others. They came to no agreement about which ones were less dangerous, though. Editors who said Yes were pretty

much in agreement that violence should not be permitted on television because it would not be easily avoided there.

An examination of the preferences of the respondents between reading, movies and television showed that editors preferred reading over the other two, but that freshmen liked them all about equally, and spent an equal amount of time on all of them.

Question Sixteen asked the participants to rate ten elements according to the threat that they posed to young people. Each one got the following percentage of first place votes:

EDITORS	STUDENTS
1. Violence (23%)	1. Atheism (26%)
2. Racial prejudice (20%)	2. Violence (23%)
3. Atheism (17%)	3. Pornography (13%)
4. Pornography (15%)	4. Racial prejudice (13%)
5. Homosexuality (8%)	5. Explicit sex (11.7%)
6. Communism (6%)	6. Homosexuality (5%)
7. Explicit Sex (6%)	7. Communism (4%)
8. Sexual stereotyping (5%)	8. Sexual stereotyping (3%)
9. Obscenities (3%)	9. Cursing (1.7%)
10. Cursing (1.5%)	10. Obscenities (1.1%)

Since it was probable that a truer picture of how dangerous the respondents saw the subjects of this questionnaire might be determined by taking a count of how many times each subject appeared in a first, second or third place slot, and then figuring what percentage of the total voters had placed it there, such a tabulation was made.

PERCENTAGE OF VOTES RATED FIRST, SECOND OR THIRD

EDITORS	STUDENTS
1. Racial prejudice (53%)	1. Violence (46.4%)
2. Violence (48.4%)	2. Pornography (39.4%)
3. Pornography (32.8%)	3. Racial prejudice (38.8%)
4. Homosexuality (29.6%)	4. Atheism (37.6%)
5. Explicit sex (28%)	5. Explicit sex (35.8%)
6. Atheism (25%)	6. Homosexuality (33%)
7. Sexual stereotyping (21.8%)	7. Communism (32%)
8. Communism (17%)	8. Sexual stereotyping (22.3%)
9. Obscenities (4.6%)	9. Obscenities (1[illegible]3%)
10. Cursing (3%)	10. Cursing (5.8%)

Both editors and students put explicit sex fifth, obscenities ninth, and cursing tenth. Racial prejudice, violence, and pornography were number one, two and three for both groups, but not in the same order.

The same kind of tabulation was made for the least dangerous subjects (those rated number 8, 9 or 10).

PERCENTAGE OF VOTES RATED EIGHTH, NINTH OR TENTH

EDITORS	
1. Cursing (52.3%)	1. Cursing (61%)
2. Atheism (33.8%)	2. Sexual stereotyping (40%)
3. Communism (32.3%)	3. Atheism (36.7%)
4. Sexual stereotyping (26%)	4. Communism (33.33%)
5. Obscenities (16.9%)	5. Racial prejudice (25.4%)
6. Explicit sex (15.38%)	6. Obscenities (24.29%)
7. Homosexuality (10.76%)	7. Violence (20.9%)
8. Racial prejudice (10.7%)	8. Homosexuality (19.7%)
9. Violence (10.7%)	9. Pornography (12.99%)
10. Pornography (4.6%)	10. Explicit sex (12.9%)

These two arrangements were combined in Table 2.

Table 2

	STUDENTS			EDITORS		
	Top 3	Middle	Bottom 3	Top 3	Middle	Bottom 3
Atheism	37.6	26	36.7	25	41.2	33.8
Communism	32	35	33	17	50.7	32.3
Cursing	5.6	33.4	61	3	44.7	52.3
Explicit Sex	35.8	51.3	12.9	28	56.62	15.38
Homosexuality	33	47.3	19.7	29.6	59.64	10.76
Obscenities	12.3	63.4	24.29	4.6	78.5	16.9
Pornography	39.4	48	13	32.8	62.6	4.6
Racial Prejudice	38.8	35.8	25.4	53.1	36.2	10.7
Sexual Stereotyping	22.3	37.7	40	21.8	52.2	26
Violence	46.4	32.9	20.9	48.4	40.9	10.7

Numbers are percentages and add up to 100% of the responses.

Students and editors definitely put cursing at the bottom. Sexual stereotyping was next to the least dangerous for students, but editors thought that atheism belonged in that spot. It was interesting that almost the same percentage of students thought atheism least dangerous as thought it most dangerous.

Over half of the editors were concerned about the danger of racial prejudice, and almost half worried about violence. Pornography bothered less than one-third. Almost a third of both editors and students considered homosexuality a danger to the young.

Depicting violence was a chief matter of concern for forty-six per cent of the students and pornography and racial prejudice were almost equally so. A fourth of the editors thought atheism a danger, and the students worried about it even more. They gave it more first place votes than any other thing. There was not as

high an agreement among the students as among editors as to what was really dangerous.

To find the true censors Question 17 asked if materials in any of the subjects in question sixteen should be legally banned, and, if so, which ones?

Seventy-four per cent of the editors said that none should be banned, and fifty-one per cent of the students agreed. What subject matter eleven editors (17%) and thirty-seven students (31%) wanted to have legal restrictions on is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

SUBJECTS CENSORS WANTED THE LAW TO BAN

EDITORS		STUDENTS	
Pornography	73%	Pornography	70%
Atheism	27%	Homosexuality	43%
Explicit sex	27%	Atheism	32%
Communism	18%	Communism	30%
Homosexuality	18%	Sexual stereotyping	24%
Cursing	9%	Explicit sex	22%
Obscenities	9%	Racial prejudice	19%
		Violence	13.5%
		Cursing	13.5%
		Obscenities	11%

Note: Percentages will not add up to 100% because the censors often listed more than one thing that they wanted banned by law.

Pornography was feared by seventy per cent of both groups. Even though cursing, obscenities and communism were not considered dangerous by the majority, both groups of censors wanted them banned by law where young people were concerned. Homosexuality rated fairly in the most dangerous list, and appeared in both groups of censors' lists of things to pass laws against.

Violence in the media, which had been considered more dangerous than pornography by the editors, did not rate a legal restriction among editor censors, and only 18% of the student censors thought a legal ban on it was necessary.

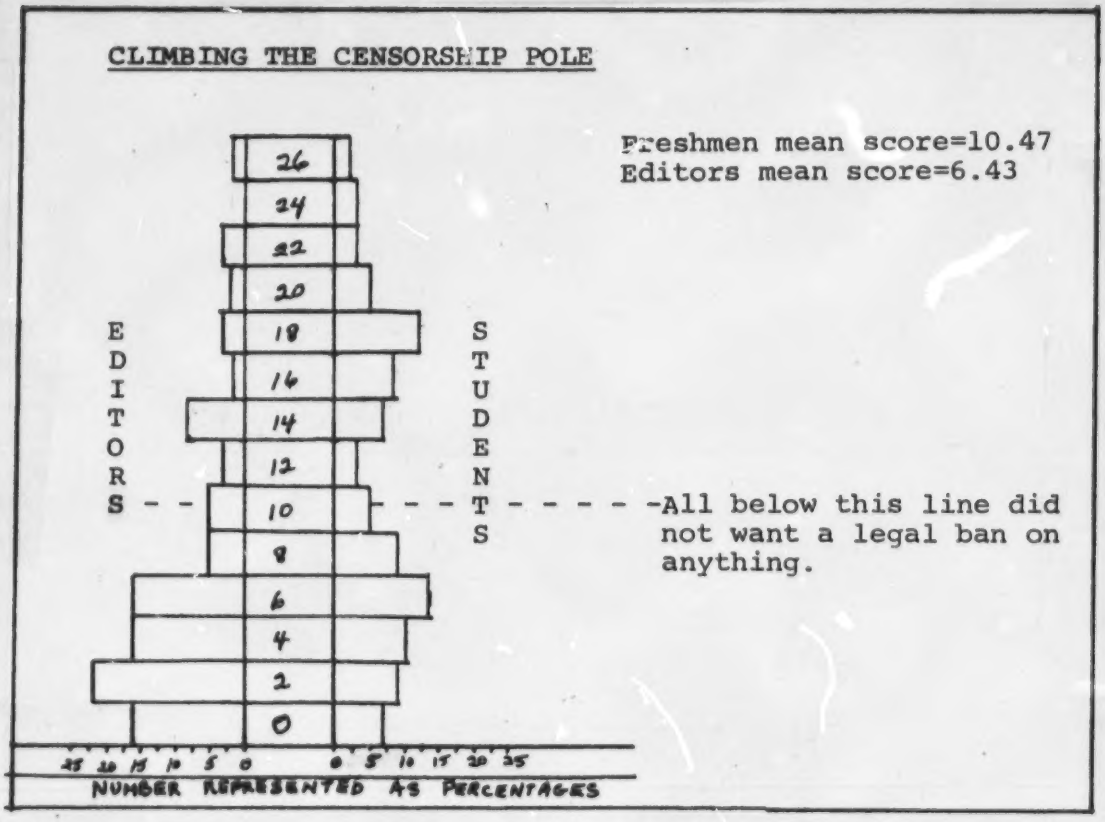
To ascertain a censorship profile, two points were assigned for each question which called for banning or eliminating something, and ten points were given if a person wanted a legal ban on material. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

SCORE	NUMBER MAKING SCORE		PROPORTION OF TOTAL MAKING SCORE	
0=highest 26=lowest	Editors	Students	Editors	Students
26	1	2	.02	.02
24	0	5	-	.04
22	2	4	.03	.03
20	1	8	.02	.07
18	2	14	.03	.12
16	1	10	.02	.08
14	5	11	.08	.09
12	2	4	.03	.03
10	3	6	.05	.05
8	3	11	.05	.09
6	10	17	.16	.14
4	10	12	.16	.10
2	14	11	.22	.09
0	10	8	.16	.07

When results were put into two verticle bar graphs, as if the scores were climbing a pole, it was easy to see which group had more of the censors. All below the score of ten did not want

to ban anything by law. Many more editors were in this group than were students.



Since the assigning of scores permitted statistical tests other than the chi-square, several were done. A t-test showed no difference between the 51 male editors and the 13 female editors of the study. An analysis of variance showed no difference in editors from the various geographical areas of the United States, but when a similar test was done for age level, the 26 to 35-year-old group was much more liberal than were the other groups. Although the analysis of variance did not show the 15 to 25 age-level group of college students to be more conservative than the

36-to-45 group or the over-46 group, a look at their answers showed a small difference. When freshmen of the 15-to-25 age-level group were compared to upperclassmen of the same age, they still showed a small difference. The mean of freshmen was 10.47 and that of upperclassmen was 9.35. This is probably not of statistical significance, but it may indicate that education tends to make a person more liberal. It would be illuminating to see what a less educated group would do in comparison to editors and freshmen.

One can only speculate about what caused the liberalism of the 26 to 35-year-olds. They were teenagers in the sixties, and it is hard not to see them as products of that liberal age. It is entirely possible, though, that this age is always the most liberal in normal adult development.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

Results of the study showed editors significantly different from students on ten of the seventeen questions in the questionnaire. More students were willing to ban materials than were editors, but the majority of both groups were against censorship. Women were more restrictive about sex and sexual stereotyping than were men. Young and old were about the same, with the exception of a very liberal group between 26 and 35 years old.

The attitude of editors was a dichotomy. They supported freedom of the press with their answers, but their reasons showed emotions that were somewhat turbulent. Although 80% of the editors were men, the psychological drive to keep the young from danger is

visibly present.

People in this study feared the same things, and two of those top dangers were different from the fears of twenty years ago. Violence and racial prejudice have been added to older areas of deep concern.

Young people are almost as conservative as older ones. The mean for ages 15 through 25 years was 8 in the censorship profile, and 9.31 for everyone over 46.

It would appear that even the most staunch advocates of freedom of speech are likely to react emotionally if they think young people are threatened by materials. However, the human being has other means of protecting them as suggested by this study. The freshmen reaction to obscenity revealed how little threat it had for them because they had heard obscenities so much. If a thing is exposed long enough to people, it may become innocuous or boring.

Studies should be done on what teenagers think suitable for themselves to read and view. Other studies that might be done are the effects of certain kinds of media on growth of censorship, on male/female relationships, and on stereotypes of both sexes. These could be both content analysis studies and effect studies.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Edward B. Jenkinson, "How to Condemn a Book Without Reading It." Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, XXVII:3 (May, 1978), p. 71.

[2]"U.S. Grants Visa to 'Communist" Union Member." Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, XXVI:6 (November, 1977), p. 176.

[3]Caroline Peterson, A Study of Censorship Affecting the Secondary School English Literature Teachers (Temple University, 1976)

[4]L.B. Woods, Censorship Involving Educational Institutions in the United States, 1966-75, (University of Texas, 1977), p. 150.

[5]U.S. President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 191.

[6]Ibid., p. 235.

[7]Linda Fischer and Al Cheyne, "Sex-role Stereotypes in Textbooks Recommended for Classroom Use," (University of Waterloo, 1978), Ontario Ministry of Education.

MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Are you upset by curse words in books and films? yes___no___.
2. Do curse words bother you in books for children 12 years old or younger? yes___no___.

   Why are you or are you not bothered by curse words?
3. If a book or film deals with atheism, do you think that it should be banned? yes___no___.

   Why?
4. A book or film which is sexually explicit--even if moral--should be kept from certain people such as the young. yes___no___/

   Why?

   When did you first decide that this was so?
5. Books or films which show Indians, Blacks or Orientals in a derogatory way should be banned. yes___no___.

   Why?

   What caused you to believe this?
6. Books or films which show women subject to men or inferior to men should be banned? yes___no___.

   Why?
7. Women should be shown as housewives or mothers and nothing else in books and films. yes___no___.

   Why?

   Can you say what made you have your opinions on women?
8. Communism should be shown as a desirable economic system in books and films. yes___no___.

   Why?

   How long have you had this opinion?
9. Four-letter words (obscenities) should be eliminated from books or films. yes___no___.

   Why?

   What makes you feel this way?
10. Sex education of children 12 years old or under is undesirable. yes___no___.

    Why?

11. Pictures showing sexual intercourse are out of place in books or films. yes___no___.

    Why?

12. Erotic classics such as The Arabian Nights or The Kama Sutra should be in libraries. yes___no___.

    Why?

13. Adolescent novels should be on safe subjects and should not include things like homosexuality, pre-marital pregnancy, drugs and divorce. yes___no___.

    Why?

14. Textbooks which show mistakes made by the United States in dealings with foreign nations should be allowed in American elementary schools. yes___no___.

15. Violence on television, in the movies or in folktales (such as Little Red Riding Hood) is permissible. yes___no___.

    Why?

    If you said no, would you permit violence in one medium and not in another? yes___no___.

    Why?

16. Which do you consider the most dangerous to young people (i.e. children under age 16)? Please rate in order from 1 (most dangerous) to 10 (least dangerous).

    Atheism.....____
    Communism.....____
    Cursing.....____
    Explicit sex.....____
    Homosexuality.....____
    Obscenities.....____
    Pornography.....____
    Racial prejudice.....____
    Sexual stereotyping.....____
    Violence.....____

17. Do you believe that materials on any of the above subjects should be legally banned? yes___no___.

    If yes, which ones?

PERSONAL DATA

Male___Female___ Age: 15 to 25___ 26 to 35___ 36 to 45___ 46 or over___

Religious preference: Protestant___Catholic___Jewish___Other___None___
Which do you do most and enjoy most? Watching T.V.___Reading___Movies___